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[REDACTED]

**STATE OF WISCONSIN**  
**Division of Hearings and Appeals**

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In the Matter of

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

DECISION

FOO/161480

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**PRELIMINARY RECITALS**

Pursuant to a petition filed October 25, 2014, under Wis. Admin. Code § HA 3.03(1), to review a decision by the Milwaukee Enrollment Services in regard to FoodShare benefits (FS), a hearing was held on November 18, 2014, at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The issue for determination is whether the agency properly reduced the Petitioner's FS benefits effective December 1, 2014.

There appeared at that time and place the following persons:

**PARTIES IN INTEREST:**

Petitioner:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

]

Respondent:

Department of Health Services  
1 West Wilson Street, Room 651  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

By: Simone Johnson

Milwaukee Enrollment Services  
1220 W Vliet St, Room 106  
Milwaukee, WI 53205

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:**

Debra Bursinger  
Division of Hearings and Appeals

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. Petitioner (CARES # [REDACTED]) is a resident of Milwaukee County.

2. On October 20, 2014, the Petitioner completed a FS renewal. She reported Social Security retirement income of \$620/month and shelter expenses of \$186/month (includes heat and electricity). She does not receive WHEAP benefits. She has no phone or other utility expenses.
3. On October 21, 2014, the agency issued a Notice of Decision to the Petitioner informing her that, based on the information provided at the renewal, her FS benefits would be reduced to \$54/month effective December 1, 2014.
4. On October 25, 2014, the Petitioner filed an appeal with the Division of Hearings and Appeals.

### **DISCUSSION**

In determining the amount of FS to be issued each month, the agency must budget all of the recipient's nonexempt income, including earned and unearned income. 7 C.F.R. §273.9(b). From that income, certain deductions are allowed. The deductions include a standard deduction, which currently is \$155 per month for a one-person household. 7 C.F.R. §273.9(d)(1); FoodShare Handbook (FSH), § 4.6.2. Another deduction is the earned income deduction, which equals 20% of the household's total earned income. 7 C.F.R. §273.9(d)(2); FSH, § 4.6.3. A third possible deduction is for medical expenses exceeding \$35 in a month for elderly or disabled persons. 7 C.F.R. §273.9(d)(3); FSH, § 4.6.4. A fourth deduction is for child/dependent care. 7 C.F.R. §273.9(d)(4); FSH, § 4.6.6. The final deduction is for shelter expenses; the deduction is equal to the excess expense above 50% of net income remaining after other deductions. 7 C.F.R. §273.9(d)(5); FSH, § 4.6.7.

On April 28, 2014, a change was made to the standard utility allowance/deduction available to household receiving FS benefits. See DHS Operations Memo 14-16. Households that have received a payment from the Wisconsin Housing Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) in the previous 12 months receive the full Housing Standard Utility Allowance (HSUA) of \$450/month. Households that pay two or more non-heat qualifying utility expenses (phone, water, sewer, electric, cooking fuel, or trash) receive a Limited Utility Allowance (LUA) of \$313/month. Households that pay only a non-heat electric bill receive an Electric Utility Allowance (EUA) of \$153/month. Household that pay only water, sewer, septic tank installation/maintenance or wastewater treatment bills receive a Water and Sewer Utility Allowance (WUA) of \$80/month. Household that pay only a cooking fuel expense receive a Fuel Utility Allowance (FUA) of \$32/month. Households that pay only a telephone expense, including cell phones, receive a Phone Utility Allowance (PUA) of \$30/month. Households that pay only a trash or garbage bill receive a Garbage and Trash Utility Allowance (TUA) of \$18/month.

In this case, the Petitioner did not dispute the income or expense deductions budgeted by the agency. She testified that she does have occasional medical expenses. Petitioner was advised that if she has monthly medical expenses, she can submit receipts of those expenses to the agency to determine if those expenses will impact her FS allotment.

I reviewed the budget screen for the agency's determination and conclude the agency properly determined the Petitioner's FS benefits effective December 1, 2014 based on the information provided by the Petitioner. The reduction in benefits resulted from the change in the policy regarding utility standards. The Petitioner does not have any monthly utility obligations and this resulted in a decrease in her benefits.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

The agency properly determined the Petitioner's FS benefits effective December 1, 2014.

**THEREFORE, it is**

**ORDERED**

That the Petitioner's appeal is dismissed.

## REQUEST FOR A REHEARING

This is a final administrative decision. If you think this decision is based on a serious mistake in the facts or the law, you may request a rehearing. You may also ask for a rehearing if you have found new evidence which would change the decision. Your request must explain what mistake the Administrative Law Judge made and why it is important or you must describe your new evidence and tell why you did not have it at your first hearing. If you do not explain these things, your request will have to be denied.

To ask for a rehearing, send a written request to the Division of Hearings and Appeals, P.O. Box 7875, Madison, WI 53707-7875. Send a copy of your request to the other people named in this decision as "PARTIES IN INTEREST." Your request for a rehearing must be received no later than 20 days after the date of the decision. Late requests cannot be granted.

The process for asking for a rehearing is in Wis. Stat. § 227.49. A copy of the statutes can be found at your local library or courthouse.

## APPEAL TO COURT

You may also appeal this decision to Circuit Court in the county where you live. Appeals must be served and filed with the appropriate court no more than 30 days after the date of this hearing decision (or 30 days after a denial of rehearing, if you ask for one).

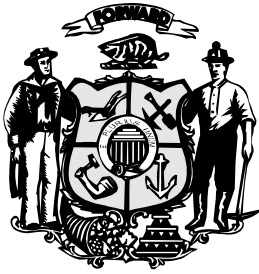
For purposes of appeal to circuit court, the Respondent in this matter is the Department of Health Services. After filing the appeal with the appropriate court, it must be served on the Secretary of that Department, either personally or by certified mail. The address of the Department is: 1 West Wilson Street, Room 651, Madison, Wisconsin 53703. A copy should also be sent to the Division of Hearings and Appeals, 5005 University Avenue, Suite 201, Madison, WI 53705-5400.

The appeal must also be served on the other "PARTIES IN INTEREST" named in this decision. The process for appeals to the Circuit Court is in Wis. Stat. §§ 227.52 and 227.53.

Given under my hand at the City of Milwaukee,  
Wisconsin, this 11th day of December, 2014

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\sDebra Bursinger  
Administrative Law Judge  
Division of Hearings and Appeals



**State of Wisconsin\DIVISION OF HEARINGS AND APPEALS**

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The preceding decision was sent to the following parties on December 11, 2014.

Milwaukee Enrollment Services  
Division of Health Care Access and Accountability